

Project briefs

Non-code contributions +
Unifying the Juju ecosystem



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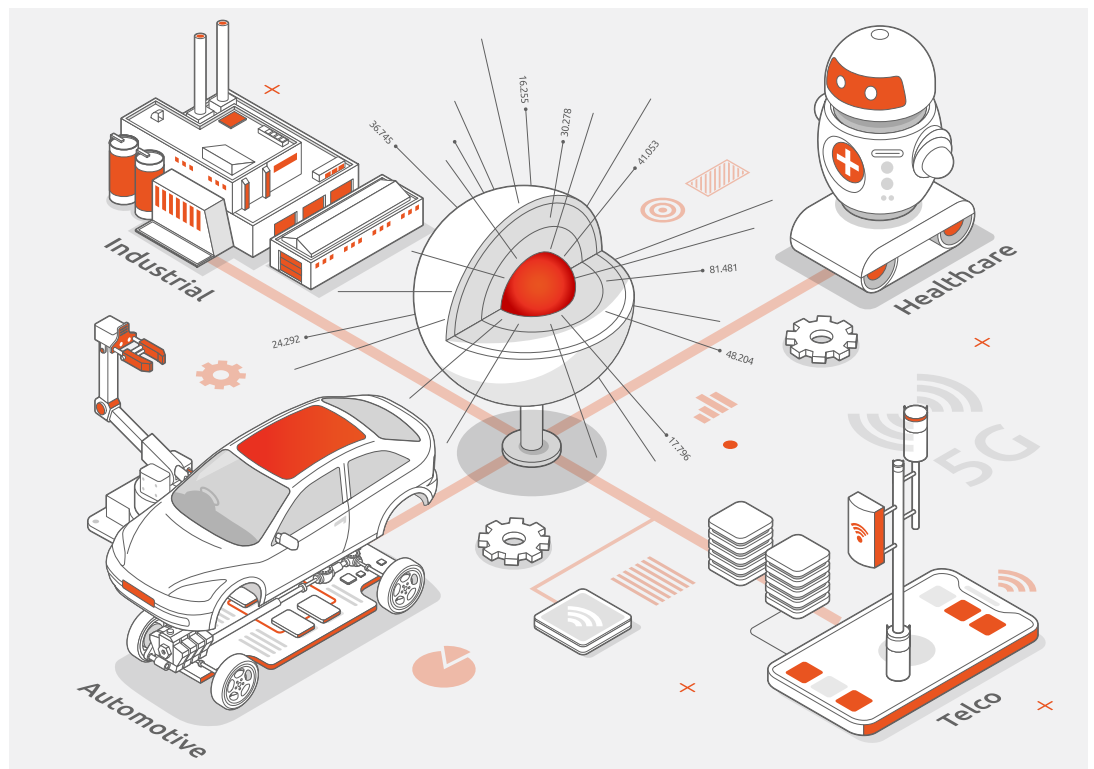
About Canonical

Canonical is the company behind Ubuntu, the world's most popular open source operating system for desktop, cloud computing, IoT, AI, and enterprise infrastructure. As a leader in open source innovation, we provide cutting-edge software, automation tools, and enterprise-grade support that empower developers, businesses, and communities worldwide.

For nearly two decades, Canonical has been at the forefront of the open source revolution, helping organisations of all sizes build scalable, secure, and efficient software solutions. Our technology powers global data centres, cloud environments, Kubernetes clusters, and edge computing applications, ensuring seamless operations across industries such as telecommunications, finance, and AI-driven services.

With a strong commitment to collaboration, transparency, and efficiency, we work closely with the open source community to drive innovation and enable businesses to adopt cloud-native, containerised, and AI-driven workloads. Our expertise spans security, automation, and multi-cloud operations, making Ubuntu the trusted choice for developers and enterprises worldwide.

At Canonical, we believe in making open source accessible, sustainable, and future-proof. By fostering a culture of openness and collaboration, we continue to shape the next generation of software infrastructure, helping businesses thrive in an increasingly digital and connected world.



LINKS:

- [Trusted open source for everyone](#) – Canonical
- [Company information](#) – Canonical

Open source



What is open source:

Open source refers to software (and increasingly, design, hardware, and other creative fields) whose source code is freely available for anyone to inspect, modify, and distribute. As a positive consequence, open source projects can involve their users directly in the development process by accepting contributions from anyone in a controlled way. This has led to a model and philosophy that promotes transparency, collaboration, and community driven development that millions of people associate with the open source movement.

Why it matters:

Open source is more than just the development model, it's a movement that has transformed the technology landscape. By opening up the source code, developers and creators around the world can contribute and improve projects leading to:

- **Accelerated innovation:** Open source projects evolve quickly as a global community collaborates to solve problems and introduce new features.
- **Enhanced accessibility:** Anyone can access, learn from, and build upon open source projects, lowering barriers to entry and democratising technology.
- **Freedom from vendor lock-in:** Users are not tied to a single vendor's ecosystem, which fosters competition and drives improvements.
- **Increased security and reliability:** With many eyes on the code, vulnerabilities can be identified and fixed quickly, which results in more secure and robust software.

The scale and impact:

Open source is present everywhere in our digital world, it underpins 90% of the software powering of the software and modern infrastructures. Its influence stretches far beyond computing, impacting numerous industries and innovations globally, including:

- **Operating systems:** Linux and Android power everything from smartphones to servers.
- **Web browsers:** Firefox and Chromium promote a free and open internet.
- **Creative tools:** GIMP, Blender, and Penpot empower designers and digital artists.
- **Content management:** Platforms like Wordpress drive a significant portion of the web.
- **Telecommunications:** Asterisk and FreeSWITCH have redefined global communications, enabling cost effective, scalable solutions for voice and video services.
- **Cloud and infrastructure:** Kubernetes and OpenStack have revolutionised cloud computing and containerisation, forming the backbone of modern data centres and enterprise systems.
- **AI and machine learning:** Open source libraries like TensorFlow, PyTorch and Hugging Face have transformed AI research and development, making sophisticated machine learning techniques accessible to all.
- And many more...

These examples underscore how open source is not just a software model, but a global movement driving innovation, accessibility, and collaboration across diverse fields, industries, and use cases.

LINKS:

- [The Open Source Definition](#) – Open Source Initiative
- [What is open source?](#) – opensource.com
- [The open source way](#) – opensource.com
- [Software as a public good](#) – GitHub
- [Benefits and Community Impact](#) – Medium

Non-code contributions

Increasing designer participation in open source projects and contributing non-code contributions.



The challenge

The open source world has traditionally thrived on the contributions of developers and engineers, yet the inclusion of designers remains significantly under-represented. Despite the growing need for user-centric designs and experiences, designers often find it challenging to navigate or participate in the open source ecosystem.

Inclusivity is a fundamental pillar of the open source community. While Canonical acknowledges the importance of including design, design processes, and design thinking in open source, the larger ecosystem of the open source community's projects and products lack that touch of design and way to facilitate designers to contribute their ideas.

Existing platforms to contribute to open source projects don't meet the expectations of non-technical designers, therefore, many open source projects and products lack the engagement from a vast pool of possible contributors.

Context & problem statement

Open source projects have excelled in attracting developers, whose contributions are the backbone of these initiatives. However, engaging designers in open source has proven more challenging, resulting in user experiences that fail to meet their full potential. While the experience for developers and project maintainers has been optimised, non-code contributions (e.g. design – UI designs, accessibility audits, user research, user flows, information architectures, etc...) are frequently overlooked, not prioritised, or not even thought of being implemented. This makes the process intimidating and inaccessible for designers seeking to contribute meaningfully.

Designers face barriers such as absence of clear pathways to get started, limited resources tailored to their needs, and a lack of visibility of open source projects that welcome design contributions. As a result, the wealth of creativity and problem solving skills that designers could bring remains untapped.

So how might we create a more inviting, engaging, and rewarding experience for designers to contribute to open source projects?

LINKS TO UNDERSTAND CODE CONTRIBUTIONS:

- [A brief introduction to Git for beginners | GitHub – GitHub](#)
- [Contributing to Open Source – Here's How to Do It – Learn Fast Make Things](#)

The opportunity of Open Design

Open Design goes beyond creating polished interfaces, it represents a fundamental shift in how we integrate design thinking into the open source ecosystem it provides a vision for collaboration that is transparent, inclusive, and iterative as open source code development. Through this initiative, Canonical aims to:

1. Make it easy to identify projects to contribute to and find designers willing to contribute, providing clear pathways to start contributing.
2. Streamline the engagement by building resources and providing streamlined processes for designers to engage with open-source projects.
3. Enhance collaboration by facilitating communication channels and fostering a culture of continuous open feedback.
4. Advocate for design and the value of open design to empower individuals to develop their design skills and actively participate in shaping the future of open-source design.

The vision

Just as open source code thrives on transparency, inclusivity, and collective effort, so should design. By treating design with the same openness and collaboration as code, we can unite developers, designers, and project maintainers in a shared mission to build better user experiences

As a designer, ...

- I want... clear pathways to discover open source projects that need design contributions.
- I want... an intuitive and welcoming onboarding experience that helps me understand how to contribute.
- I want... recognition for my contributions, such as portfolio integration, credits, or community acknowledgement.
- I want... collaboration tools and communication channels that allow me to work effectively with developers and project maintainers.
- I want... resources and guidelines that explain how design fits into open source projects and what is expected of me.
- I want... a design-friendly workflow that integrates with open source tools and platforms, rather than forcing me into developer-centric processes.

Task

Design a new product, service or feature that solves for at least one of the following How Might We's (HMW):

- HMW... make it easier for designers to discover and engage with open source projects?
- HMW... create a welcoming and inclusive onboarding experience for non-code contributions?
- HMW... bridge the communication gap between designers, developers, and project maintainers?
- HMW... provide visibility and recognition for design contributions in open source projects?
- HMW... advocate for open design and demonstrate its value to the open source community?
- HMW... integrate design workflows into existing open source collaboration tools (e.g. Figma to GitHub)?

Constraints & considerations

- Address key pain points that discourage designers from participating in open source, such as lack of visibility, unclear contribution paths, and developer-focused tools.

- Ensure that the solution promotes collaboration, inclusivity, and transparency, the core values of the open source community.

- Consider how designers can showcase their work to make contributions more rewarding.

- The experience should be intuitive and approachable, removing unnecessary frictions for designers unfamiliar with open source workflows.

- Ensure that the solution is scalable to support both small and large open source projects without requiring excessive manual effort to manage.

- Avoid reliance on proprietary tools or closed systems that could limit participation and exclude contributors who prefer and/or require open source alternatives.

- Ensure sustainability by minimising costly resources and complex upkeep so that open source communities can easily maintain and scale the solution over time.

HELPFUL LINKS:

- [Open Source Design](#) – Open Source Design

- [Open source ethos](#) – opensource.com

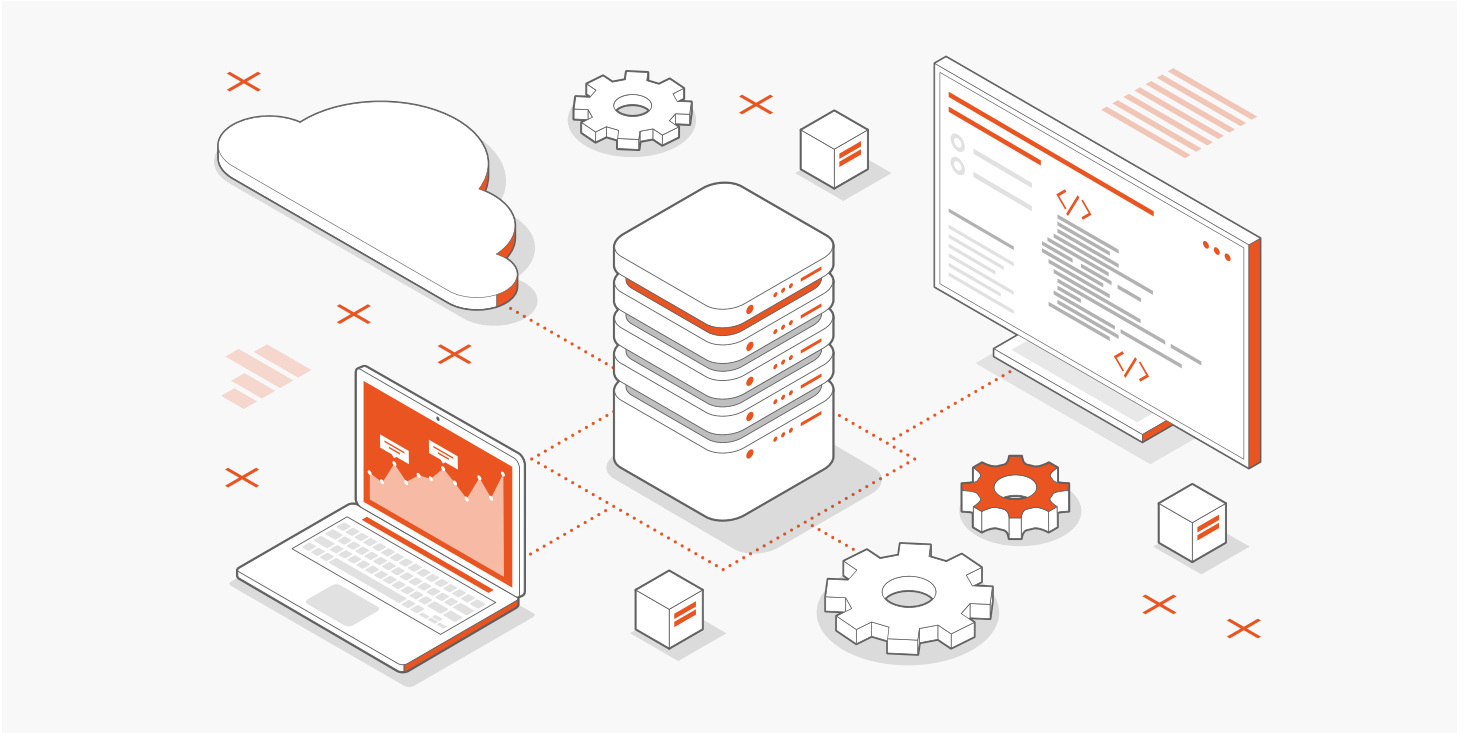
- [Open Source Guides](#) – GitHub

- [Contribute.design](#) – Contribute.design

- [Open Design Survey Report](#) – Canonical

Unifying the Juju ecosystem

Improve the accessibility, clarity, and cohesiveness of Juju's documentation to enhance user experience and encourage adoption.



The challenge

Juju is a powerful ecosystem of tools for deploying and managing applications across various infrastructures, including Kubernetes and cloud environments, using operators called 'charms'. However, its documentation is scattered across multiple sources, making it difficult for new and existing developers to grasp the full scope of Juju's capabilities.

New users struggle to understand Juju's value proposition, how to get started, and where to find the resources necessary to progress through its lifecycle (from connecting to a cloud, using charmed applications, to handling Day 2 operations). The lack of a centralised and intuitive documentation system makes the learning curve steep and discourages adoptions.

LINKS:

- [Canonical Juju](#) – Canonical
- [What is Juju \(Very old, high-level video\)](#) – Canonical
- [What is a charm \(operator\)?](#) – Canonical

Context & problem statement

Currently, Juju's documentation exists across multiple unlinked sources, creating several issues:

- There is no clear entry point for users to understand the Juju ecosystem, leading to confusion and abandonment.
- Key concepts, features, and workflows are spread across different pages, making it difficult to navigate and find relevant information.
- Users lack a guided journey through Juju's lifecycle, causing an intimidating and fragmented experience.
- The disconnected documentation makes it harder for Juju to showcase its full capabilities and benefits, limiting its adoption and growth.

By unifying and streamlining Juju's documentation, we can lower the barrier to entry, improve user experience, and ensure that both new and advanced users can easily access the information they need.

The vision

Documentation should be unified, well structured, and easily navigable space that provides a clear and guided high-level learning path for new users while ensuring accessibility for both technical and non-technical users. By centralising resources and providing clear pathways, we aim to make it easier for users to navigate, adopt, and fully leverage Juju.

As a potential user of Juju, ...

- I want... a clear starting point that explains what Juju is and why I should use it.
- I want... a step-by-step onboarding experience that guides me through the essential concepts and workflows.
- I want... a centralised hub where I can find all Juju-related documentation without searching multiple sources.
- I want... an intuitive and structured navigation system to help me locate specific information quickly.
- I want... a connected documentation journey that seamlessly links all aspects of Juju, from setup to advanced operations.
- I want... use case driven guides and examples that show how Juju applies to real-world scenarios.

Tasks

Design a new product, service or feature for Canonical that solves for at least one of the following How Might We's (HMW):

- HMW... create a unified documentation experience that makes it easier for users to navigate and understand the Juju ecosystem?
- HMW... improve the onboarding experience for new users by providing structured learning paths?
- HMW... ensure documentation is easily discoverable and accessible to different types of users?
- HMW... integrate documentation into Juju's workflows so users can find relevant resources when they need them?
- HMW... present Juju's value proposition more effectively through its documentation?

Constraints & considerations

A WORD OF ADVICE...

For this brief, we're aiming for you to develop a **high-level understanding of Juju, its main concepts and stages of usage**. Rather than diving into the low-level details, we want you to grasp the overall workflow, key components, and the fundamental way Juju manages services. This approach is designed to prevent you from getting sidetracked into intricate technical details that could lead you down unproductive rabbit holes. Feel free to explore as much as you'd like about Juju, but remember to not get caught up in the nuts and bolts of very specific technical details.

- Address key pain points such as fragmented information, lack of structure, and difficulty in discovering relevant documentation.
- Ensure the documentation is accessible to both beginners and experienced users, avoiding overly technical jargon where possible.
- Promote consistency and clarity by standardising documentation formats and linking all resources effectively.
- Avoid reliance on proprietary documentation platforms that could limit access or collaboration.
- Ensure scalability so that new features, updates, and community contributions can be integrated easily over time.
- Consider interactive elements such as tutorials, walkthrough, and visual guides to enhance user engagement.

HELPFUL LINKS:

- [Auth0 Docs Journey](#) – Auth0
- [What is Juju](#) – Canonical
- [Operator Day Europe 2023 | The beauty of Juju with Jon Seager](#) – Canonical

Open source licensing & Creative Commons

At Canonical, we embrace the open source ethos and advocate for open licensing practices across all fields. While your project will remain under your own Intellectual Property ownership, it's important to understand the basics of licensing and the benefits it brings.



Open source licensing:

Open source licenses are designed specifically for software. They allow anyone to access, modify, and redistribute the work, fostering a collaborative development environment. This transparency not only accelerates innovation but also enhances security and quality through community involvement.

Creative Commons licensing:

For creative works (e.g. design, artwork, writing), a Creative Commons (CC) license is a more appropriate choice. Creative Commons provides a range of licenses that let you decide how others can use your work. For example, you might allow modifications or require attributions, while restricting commercial use. This approach is tailored to creative content, where the nuances of art and design differ from software development.

READ MORE ABOUT LICENSING:

- [An Introduction to Open Source Licensing for complete beginners](#) – Canonical
- [Creative Commons](#) – Creative Commons

Are you interested in contributing to open source projects through design?

[Get in touch >](#)

